



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

price, than we realized before the war, with our interest reduced to one hundred and twenty-five millions, and our bounties paid, we may soon hope to bring down our expenses to one hundred millions, and to return to a gold and silver currency. The completion of the Pacific railway in June will be a great measure of free trade. The Republican party is pledged by its platform to reduce and simplify our taxes; and with honesty and intelligence at the helm, our debt will resolve itself into four or five per cent consols, the interest on it be paid by the imposts on spirit and tobacco, and our nation be free to devote itself to the development of the continent.

E. H. DERBY.

ART. IV. — *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Sir Richard Steele, Soldier, Dramatist, Essayist, and Patriot, with his Correspondence, and Notices of his Contemporaries, the Wits and Statesmen of Queen Anne's Time.* By HENRY R. MONTGOMERY. Edinburgh: William P. Nimmo. 1865.

IN one of those naïve sketches by which Émile Souvestre gently sought to correct the melodramatic tendencies of his countrymen, he describes a young Parisian visiting the provincial estate to which he had fallen heir, and the disgust with which he contemplated the obsolete furniture, frugal arrangements, and grim family portraits of the domain. Having determined to sell the whole inheritance, and retired to the uninviting bedroom to sleep, he had a vivid dream, wherein the ancestral effigies so repulsive to his taste seemed endowed with life, and successively stood at his bedside. The first described the laborious life which enabled him at last to purchase land, and leave it to his son, whose industry resulted in the erection of a substantial dwelling. His successor entered the army and won a name for the family, which, thus provided with means and honor, was next represented by an educated citizen, whose heir, in turn, by his legal training and official rank, still further increased its prestige and wealth, which

became consolidated into civic position and a handsome income through the self-denying economy and wise conduct of the next heir, who was thereby enabled to leave the new inheritor resources adequate to an eminent social position and life of leisure, open to all the refined enjoyments and broad culture of the present age. The young heir awoke with a sentiment of gratitude and respect for the progenitors on whose "counterfeit presentments" he had looked so disdainfully. He recognized his obligations to those who had gone before, and became, for the first time, conscious, in his own person, of the gradual process, the antecedent toils, sacrifices, and fidelity, through which he had attained his present advantages.

There is an analogous lesson to be learned by the recipients of intellectual benefits. The average culture of one age is the bequest of a preceding; the means and methods whereby taste is improved and knowledge acquired have been earned for us, often by long and patient work and noble self-denial; and among the benignities of the literature which is our peerless heritage, one of the most precious, because the least exclusive, is its social element,—the labor of love that softened pedantry into pleasure, that, by sympathetic tact, transformed the scholastic into the companionable, and made cloistered philosophy as "familiar as household words."

The times of Steele are, perhaps, more familiar to us than any other period of English history, as regards their political and social traits. Macaulay, in his reviews of the chief writers of that age, has incidentally, but with much detail, described them; and in Thackeray's novel of "Esmond" we have many graphic and salient phases of the period. Between the robust and affluent development of the age of Bacon and Shakespeare, and the more refined and general culture of our own day, the reign of Anne seems to occupy a kind of table-land in the historic landscape, boasting no such degrees or qualities of literary genius as the highest exemplars of either period, but, when thoughtfully contemplated, revealing the dawn of that average intelligence and the harbingers of those great reforms which distinguish modern Anglo-Saxon civilization. Especially is this apparent in the more enlightened appreciation and more humane expedients through which society has become culti-

vated, and criticism profound and elaborate. We recognize in the softened spirit of the public amusements and civil laws of the present day the advanced standard which the minor moralists of those days inaugurated, and refer the cosmopolitan and refined tone of Hazlitt and Arnold to the new relish for the amenities of literature and life originally excited by Steele and his contemporaries.

While Montaigne is justly entitled to the credit of having originated the social element of modern literature, by adapting his vernacular, when a dead language was the distinction of scholars and the monopoly of thinkers, to the expression of thoughts near to the average experience of human nature, to the diffusion of knowledge and the "division of the records of the mind," — while an effort was made in the same direction by Lord Bacon, with, however, a certain stiffness and stateliness of diction, the reverse of colloquial, — and while Abram Cowley and Sir William Temple imparted a new ease and elegance to the same species of writing, and La Bruyère memorably adventured in characterization, which subsequently formed so desirable a phase therein, — yet the originator of the social element in English literature was Sir Richard, as he was known in political history, or, as we best identify him in literary retrospect, Dick Steele. Without discussing the question of his merits as a writer, compared with his contemporaries, and especially Addison, it is enough to recognize the fact that the idea of a colloquial critic and censor first found adequate illustration in his pen, — that the fresh and free streams of knowledge, the wit and wisdom whose benign purveyors are his lineal descendants, first obtained currency and were made a circulating medium by his apt hand, warm heart, and frank utterance. Expanded, intensified, and diversified as the social element of literature has become, we can yet distinctly trace it to this source, — transmitted from "Tatler" to "Rambler," from "Citizen of the World" to "Man of Feeling," from "Seer" to "Friend," from "Table-Talk" to "Sketch-Book," and so on to "Noctes Ambrosianæ," — now imposing in Edinburgh or piquant in Saturday Review, overflowing with the pathos of rhetoric in Carlyle or its brilliancy in Macaulay, naïvely quaint, tender, and true with humor in Elia,

profound in Coleridge, enjoyable in Hunt, cheery with sense in Sydney Smith, acutely æsthetic in Hazlitt, practical in De Foe and Franklin, eloquently paradoxical in Ruskin, ingenuously winsome in Goldsmith, hearty in tone or kindled and shaded with sentiment in Wilson, graceful in Irving, or grandiose in Johnson. Each and all of these, as well as numerous other writers, are distinguished from their predecessors by this genial social element, which has worked so great a revolution in the relation of letters to humanity, making them interfuse and interpret each other. That Steele consciously traced his felicitous literary enterprise to social inspiration is manifest from his remark about Swift's conversation, which he describes as "very advantageous to one whose imagination was to be continually employed upon obvious and common subjects, though at the same time obliged to treat them in a new and unbeaten method." He was, indeed, far more of a companion than a scholar; his writings are as desultory as they are incomplete; with the exception of the comedies and some of the more elaborate essays, he wrote hastily, often on the spur of the moment, and whenever the mood or necessity prompted; for he was often pressed for "copey" at the last moment, and not infrequently the printer's devil waited at club, tavern, or office-desk, while he finished a page. Yet few writers have been more industrious. He wrote a poem called "The Procession" before he was of age, and in the intervals of his serial publications and dramatic pieces he issued the "Lady's Library," "Poetical Miscellanies," etc. And, besides his official routine and parliamentary duties, he was often busy upon some financial scheme, like the project of a patent fish-pool, whereby fish could be brought alive from all parts of the coast to London. He was an able and early advocate of Toleration, and his social talents were in constant requisition; so that, with political, official, and literary work, few men of the day were more busy and efficient than Steele in his prime. The "ardor of his politics" contrasts with the good temper of his censorship, and his want of thrift with his disinterested public spirit. Conviviality and extravagance are the only blots on his fair fame; there is not the slightest evidence to justify Macaulay's surmise that he gambled, and his disparagement of Steele is

a rhetorical expedient into which he was led by his partial estimate of Addison.

Steele was one of those men of whom it is said, that "they are their own worst enemies." Of sanguine temperament and ardent feelings, he possessed in large measure both the noble qualities and the weaknesses usually allied with them. All the inconsistencies that may coexist with a genuine love of right and truth, united to impulses of candor and generosity, mark his conduct; recklessness blended with benevolence, improvidence combined with occasional resolves of prudence and economy, and a social inclination too strong for the obligations of duty, alternately win and repel us; but the lovable qualities of the man soften our censure of his frequent want of self-control. At the commencement of his literary and official career, a thousand pounds which he borrowed of Addison he promptly repaid; but from first to last he was embarrassed by debt, often at a loss to provide for immediate wants, and continually resorting to the temporary expedients of the spendthrift. He lived at a time when to drink deeply was the habit of society, and he is as frank in acknowledging his weakness in this respect as he is irresolute in its amendment. It is a surprise to those who follow his pecuniary troubles to the end to find that his debts were so small in comparison with those which at the present day bring extravagant authors to bankruptcy: he gave up his property to his creditors, and when their claims were satisfied there remained a very considerable sum for his children. He forfeited an inheritance in his youth by his independent course, his West India property depreciated in value, and his wife's patrimony was so heavily mortgaged that the income derivable therefrom only sufficed to meet the expenses of his children's education. He was, therefore, often wholly dependent upon the avails of his pen and his appointments, and both were precarious. Still it is apparent that a little method, a systematic expenditure, and occasional retrenchment would have kept him free from the perpetual vexation and anxiety incident to pecuniary straits. These sadly marred the dignity of his life, disturbed the tranquil exercise of his mind, and exposed him to the shafts of malevolence. Alive to his parental obligations,

he was at times keenly remorseful ; he had not the patience to hoard, nor the self-denial to regulate his resources ; he gave away injudiciously, was often imposed upon, and never vigilant in regard to his own interest : yet he was too little of a courtier to sacrifice his honest convictions for gain, and while dodging a creditor would relieve a beggar and entertain friends, when a more prudent man would have grudged the outlay. Two anecdotes illustrate the occasions of Steele's conviviality. When in Edinburgh, as commissioner of the forfeited estates, he caused his servants to invite the poor in the neighborhood of his lodgings to an entertainment, at which he presided with graceful urbanity ; and of this feast of beggars, he declared that it not only gave him the pleasure of filling many empty stomachs, but yielded him excellent materials for a comedy. To this, his first literary sphere, he reverted, when his periodicals had, one after another, come to an end, and partly wrote two plays, one of which was entitled "The School of Action," and the other "The Gentleman." A contemporary writer apologizes for Steele's over-indulgence "at the Trumpet" by saying that "he had to celebrate the memory of King William, and at the same time to drink his friend Addison up to conversation pitch."

Richard Steele was born in Dublin in 1671, and died at Carmarthen, Wales, in 1729. His father died when the son was eight years of age, and he appears to have derived the best of his early impressions from his mother, of whom his reminiscences, though limited, are full of tender admiration. He married from love a fair and excellent girl, who lived but a short time, and to whom he alludes in his writings with fond praise. Of his second marriage we have a full account in his correspondence ; it originated in the most devoted affection and esteem, and contributed immeasurably to his happiness. Of the three children that blessed this union, Eugene, a youth of singular promise, died some years before the period of manhood ; a daughter, Mary, was also taken away within a year of his own demise ; another daughter, Elizabeth, who seems to have inherited much of her mother's worth and loveliness and her father's magnetic attraction, and whose charms made her the object of pursuit by numerous lovers, among them Richard Savage, and one of whom it required all the

father's epistolary skill to keep from continuing addresses which were not responded to, eventually married a gentleman of distinction named Trevor. Steele was knighted by George I. in 1714. The last years of his life, after an ineffectual attempt to revive his failing health by a long sojourn at Bath, were passed in retirement in Wales, where his wife's estate was situated. The record of his domestic, official, and literary life is complete ; but little is known of its secluded close, except that he found solace in the contemplation of Nature, in the exercise of benevolence, and in the frequent perusal of the Scriptures. An old contributor to the "Tatler" dedicated a work to him in warm terms of gratitude and respect, long after his name and pen had ceased to exert immediate influence in the busy world ; we have an earnest letter of recommendation which he wrote to Walpole in behalf of a worthy aspirant for office ; and there is a characteristic anecdote of his custom on summer evenings of sitting out on the green, near his residence, to watch the sports of the rustics, and giving an order to the best dancer for a dress. The same authority informs us that his life ebbed calmly away from the slow encroachments of paralysis, which weakened his mental as well as bodily vigor, but failed to cloud the serene spirit of old age or to change the cheerful sweetness of his temper.

His first civil appointment, that of gazetteer, had made him familiar with the efficiency of periodical and cheap publications as a means of reaching the "business and bosoms" of men through the press ; his earliest literary enterprise, the little treatise called "The Christian Hero," written during his brief military career, as the record of his earnest moral convictions and a pledge of his own reformation, had revealed a talent for popular ethical writing ; and thus observation and practice combined to inspire him with a just estimate of the use and beauty of this kind of literature. And the popular mind was at the same time prepared to accept and encourage it, because of the social charm which belonged to the favorite comedies of the day. Indeed, this class of dramatic writing first brought literature home to the average sympathies of society, by reproducing its characteristics and satirizing its follies. The classic drama in France appealed

chiefly to the educated class, but with Molière the true and intimate relations of literature and society were made apparent; people came thus to feel that life and letters had a subtle and sympathetic bond; the one interpreted the other; to hear on the stage the language of the *salon*, the *café*, and the street was a pastime that opened a new intellectual pleasure to the multitude. It was the same with Goldoni in Italy; the most illiterate Venetian could appreciate the truth of his pictures of manners and the significance of his dialogue, the subjects and phrases of which were borrowed from actual and familiar life. Thus in England the comedies of Wycherley, Congreve, Farquhar, Vanbrugh, and others, by making the drama a social instead of an historical amusement, prepared the way for the colloquial censorship of Steele. And in this sphere also his own success had been memorable. When he exchanged the barracks for the library, the mess-room for the literary club, he first tried his hand at comedy. "The Funeral, or Grief à la Mode," "The Lying Lover," "The Constant Lovers," and "The Tender Husband," were all popular plays, especially the last; and they were entirely free from the obscene innuendoes and immoral tone which degraded his predecessors. Indeed, the chief fault found with Steele's comedies was that their serious aim overlaid their vivacious style; but there is often a naïve grace in the dialogue, and a true feeling in the characters, which give them a certain attraction even now on the reading; and, besides the sprightly irony, they have the noble distinction of a purity which reformed the school of English comedy.

Thus equipped, with fame as a dramatist, experience as a compiler of news, and practice as a literary moralist, Steele set himself heartily at work to "expose the false arts of life, to pull off the disguises of cunning, vanity, and affectation, and to recommend simplicity of dress, manners, and behavior." The title of his semi-weekly talk with the public had in itself a charm for readers to whom wit and taste might have appealed in vain: it implied gossip, and every fancy sketch whereby the author sought to illustrate the foibles of the day was confidently applied to some well-known individual. It was by virtue not so much of the finish as the freedom of his style

that Steele won the attention of the town. Though a fluency of expression often singularly felicitous and a ready invention were his acknowledged literary merits, it was not until the "Spectator" had succeeded the "Tatler," and Addison brought his classical discipline to the work, that all the charms of a refined style were added to those of quiet humor and colloquial geniality. But from the first the design and spirit of the enterprise were wholly due to Steele, whose aim was, he tells us, to "rally all those singularities of life, through the different professions and characters in it, which obstructed anything truly good and great": and the manner of thus exposing shams and advocating truth was not less his own; his plan being "to allure the reader with the varieties of his subject and insinuate the weight of reason with the agreeableness of art," — a process which, from his day to our own, has been the ideal of the social essayist, whose success depends upon the nearness with which he approaches this goal.

It is interesting, in the retrospect, to consider how Steele's life, character, and career specially fitted him for the work he undertook. It was one for which mere scholarly acquirements were inadequate; it implied quick and broad sympathies, clear moral intuitions, and ample opportunities for observation and intercourse. In all these respects Steele was singularly favored. His Irish blood and frank temper, if they exposed him to convivial indulgence, also put him into a relation with his fellow-creatures more cordial and candid than is apt to be the case with educated Englishmen. After a boyhood passed at the Charter-House School, where began his friendship with Addison, and a youthful training at Christ Church, Oxford, he relinquished his degree for a soldier's life, and, from being the favorite of a student-circle, became the idol of the mess-room. As secretary to Lord Cutts, who commanded his regiment, he obtained social privileges; but the idleness of a military life in time of peace made him a devotee of pleasure, until remorse drove him to portray the moral hero who could resist temptation and conform to the restraints of Christian manhood. This singular production indicates at once the moral courage of Steele, who could thus voluntarily brave the jeers of his boon companions, and also his natural proclivity to

literature, although, like Coleridge, in a moment of chagrin, he had rashly espoused the profession of arms. Having been forced into a duel, and written many "copies of verse" inspired by convivial and amatory impulse, he abandoned soldiery and became a dramatic writer, and thence emerged into the arena of political life, dependent upon dynastic struggles and changes of ministries, — holding successively the office of gazetteer, commissioner of stamps, member of Parliament, patentee of Drury Lane Theatre, and commissioner of forfeited estates of the Jacobites. Of his political career the record abounds with the fierce controversies and abrupt vicissitudes incident to patronage and party, and forming a striking contrast to the amenities of his literary life, for which, by nature and taste, he was better adapted. We cannot but feel that his true welfare lay in the peaceful path of letters, and that the strife and chagrins, as well as wasted powers, inevitable in the experience of the politician, were a poor exchange for the "beholding of the countenance of truth in the calm air of delightful studies." Arraigned for libel and sedition, and expelled the House through the injustice of the opposition, "afraid of the Pretender," and devoted to the House of Hanover, consistently befriended by Walpole, and meanly treated by the Lord Chamberlain, Steele made a gallant defence of his course as a politician, and proved himself a patriot by denouncing the nefarious South Sea Scheme, and opposing the permanency of the House of Peers, which latter question involved him in an acrimonious dispute with Addison, after a life-long friendship. His letter to Lord Oxford is a rare example of magnanimity in a partisan. His earliest political impulse arose from his admiration of William, and this was confirmed by his distrust of the Stuarts. Honest and brave in his convictions, and the kindest of men, he yet did not escape the usual consequences of a political united with a literary career; for the close of his life was darkened by the clouds of party malevolence, and chilled by the alienations of time, envy, and injustice. His writings, depreciated by Tickell, from a mistaken idea that he thereby added to his friend Addison's fame, were vulgarly attacked by Dennis, and brutally by Swift. Charged by Cibber with neglect of their

mutual interests as patentees of the theatre, he retired from the scene of public life, with the consolation of having acted a patriotic part, and yielded but occasionally to the vituperative spirit of faction, but also with the feeling that his best trophies and most serene usefulness were achieved in the pursuits of authorship.

Doubtless society then needed, as never before, the social element of literature; the time was ripe for its introduction, and to this fact much of the success of Steele's experiment is due. So far had mind shared the corruption of manners, that the grand old masterpieces of Elizabeth's reign were neglected in favor of a meretricious drama, the wit of which rarely atoned for its indecency; thousands were familiar with Dryden for one who knew Shakespeare. Educated men were pedantic, and made no impression upon the ignorance of the masses and the frivolity of society; that vast middle class, neither blest with academic training nor abandoned to illiterate mediocrity, but disciplined in taste by the study of what is best in the past and most vital in the current writing of their own tongue, had not begun to exist. The prevalent moral tone had two extremes,—the rigor of the Puritan, and the *abandon* of the pleasure-seeker; brutal sports disgraced the lower, and unscrupulous profligacy the higher ranks; piety was ridiculed, faith repudiated, and conversation either vapid or low. It was the age of periwigs and sedan-chairs, of French fashions, not only in manners, but in letters,—the age when a court favorite could intrigue successfully for the downfall of a ministry,—the age of the avaricious Marlboroughs, of Bolingbroke and Harley, Mrs. Masham and Dr. Garth, of "Blenheim" and "The Beggar's Opera," of "Lady Mary" and Parnell's "Hermit," when criticism was represented by the coarse invectives of Dennis, when Congreve was ashamed of his fame as an author, preferring that of a gentleman,—an age of gambling and of grossness, whose highest poetry was found in the polished heroics of Pope, and most effective wit in the rough satire of Swift, and in which the pure benignity of Berkeley seemed an angelic exception to the social standard. Never were lay preachers more needed, a high criticism more indispensable, or a reform in taste and manners so essential to human welfare and progress.

How congenial the form of literature he adopted was to Steele is evident from his constant recourse to it. After the "Tatler" had flowered into the "Spectator," and when that favorite series of the British Essayists had long ceased, he issued successively "The Guardian," "The Englishman," "Chit-Chat," "The Tea-Table," and "Table, Town, and Club Talk." To defend his rights as patentee, he started "The Theatre," — to argue the peerage question, "The Plebeian." Indeed, with all the progress we have made in agreeable methods of serving up literary trifles, the plan of these early essays has never been excelled; published in octavo form twice a week, they were collected and republished in handsome volumes, and from the ephemeral passed to the library shape. The dedications of the different volumes suggest how intimately they were associated with the leaders in society and politics. If we trace the entire process and progress of those first successful experiments, we find they sprang from a wide and genuine social inspiration. Steele was a government employee and a dramatic director, a man of politics and of society, of clubs and court, and thus open to all the influences of his time. Hence the aptitude of his address and the ease of his communications. He brought his daily observations of life, his gleanings in society, his early studies, his critical estimates of authors and actors, and his reflections on the destiny and duty of his fellows, to bear on his essays, — now drawing a pathetic picture, and now entering a satirical protest, advocating ameliorations in manners, suggesting improved standards, winning to more wise pastimes and more gracious intercourse. According to Gay, the effect was most salutary; gambling became disreputable, fops ridiculous, conversation manly, simple tastes prevalent, and literary culture a recognized resource. In its palmy days the "Spectator" was not less recreative than reforming; indirectly it gave birth to permanent literary achievements, inspiring Pope's sacred lyric, leading to the appreciation of Milton and Shakespeare, and suggesting to Akenside the "Pleasures of the Imagination." The story of Selkirk, by Steele, was the germ of Robinson Crusoe; the characteristic sketches of Sir Roger, Bickerstaff, and other humorous ideals, were prophetic of Shandy and Pickwick; and the machinery of

an imaginary club has been repeatedly an effective device of English literature. The circulation of these serials appears to us quite limited; Addison says, in the tenth number of the "*Spectator*," that three thousand copies were sold daily: but those were not the days of universal reading, nor of steam presses; and it is as the harbinger of periodical literature, the original impulse and precedent thereto, that we must estimate the experiment of Steele and his coadjutors. In it we find the auspicious dawn of purity in style, rectitude in morals, geniality in tone, sympathy in sentiment, grace in diction, and good sense in discourse, which, as elements of literature, had never before been so combined and made vital by true social inspiration. "The general purpose of the whole," wrote Steele, "has been to recommend truth, honor, and virtue, as the chief ornaments of life; but I considered severity of manners was absolutely essential to him who would censure others, and for that reason, and that only, chose to wear a mask." The adoption of an astrologer's name was a humorous disguise well adapted to this object; and when Addison was fairly enlisted in the work, it assumed more finished proportions, and ushered in, not only a better era of manners, but a higher standard of criticism, which at length expanded into the noble literature in this department which has so incalculably refined and enlarged the intellectual pleasures available to the countless readers of the English language in our day. What the genial temper and companionable cleverness of Steele conceived and initiated the classic taste and humane wisdom of Addison perfected. The former's part in the auspicious enterprise is to be ascribed to his character, the latter's to his culture; for it is the distinction of social over conventional literature, that its charm comes from the heart more than the head.

Fortunately, we have a means, unique and adequate, for justly estimating the native disposition and real character of Steele. His wife preserved every scrap of his written communications to her, however casual, brief, and unimportant. It is remarkable what a key is thus furnished to the knowledge of his heart and habits. The more thoughtful letters, wherein he first pleads his lover's cause, give us a complete insight into

his ardor of sentiment, religious convictions, and generous impulses; and throughout the twenty years of his married life, when his wife was at Hampton Court, Hereford, York, Wales, or London, his notes, appointing to meet her, explaining some domestic or business affair, excusing his absence, seeking to reconcile a slight misunderstanding, or giving some trifling information, make us vividly aware of how he felt, what he thought, and the manner in which his time was spent. To a reflective and observant reader, these waifs hint vastly more than they express, indicate an entire personal history, and suggest all the lights and shades of character. Swift's *Journal to Stella* is more full of details political and social, and Boswell's *Life of Johnson* far more illustrative of opinions and peculiarities; but neither is so spontaneously and sincerely autobiographic. We learn from them how desultory were the pursuits, how social the life, how convivial the habits of Steele; they guide us to his haunts, make us aware of his daily routine, of his intimate associates, of the hours he keeps, the dress he wears, and the things he does; they admit us to his consciousness; they transport us from the Treasury to the club, from the dinner-party to the theatre, from duns to duties, from court to his home. Especially do they reveal the facts and feelings of his conjugal relation. We follow the "tender husband" from Addison's table to Tonson's bookstore, from a meeting of Directors to the "Upper Flask on the edge of the Heath," and thence to the coach where his wife awaits him for an airing. His literary plans, his political prospects, his excesses, and his remorse are naïvely hinted or frankly told, often in a single line. We form, too, a vivid conception of Mrs. Steele's charms and character. His badinage about her economies, probably forced upon her by his improvidence, — the frequency of his engagements, and the pressure of his necessities, — the magnetism that draws him to her, and the employments or pleasures that keep him away, — furnish hints whereby one experienced in life-dramas can infer all the secrets of their *ménage*, and all the phases of their intercourse. Above all, these little notes, in every phrase and tone, evidence Steele's warm, wise, and chivalric appreciation of woman, — a sentiment rare in his day,

and one which had more to do with the tenderness of his writings and the moral consistency of his counsels than appears to the careless reader. To him it were needless to plead for woman's rights; he recognized them, not indeed as external civil privileges, but social authorities, in her very nature. Love, to him, was associated with, or rather sanctioned by, religion; he revered the mind, the spirit, the character of her he loved; he lived in his affections. Without deliberately putting himself, like Burns, on "the regimen of admiring a fine woman," without the æsthetic subtilty of Tennyson or the reckless passion of Byron, without morbid sentimentality on the one hand or ideal refinement on the other, Steele devoted his heart to a being "not too bright and good for human nature's daily food," and yet one whose beauty and grace of soul controlled, while it cheered and charmed. "Prue" seems a humble appellative beside Beatrice and Laura; she is no heroine of Platonic dreams or romantic devotion, no brilliant intelligence like Madame de Sévigné, or social queen like Madame Recamier, no Héloïse, Vittoria Colonna, or Portia, but a true and lovely English wife, fond and fair, but also noble, firm, and wise. She is a helpmeet, a companion, a guide, a grace; one whose coldness dismays, whose appeal melts, whose example nerves, whose love makes happy; to love whom increases self-respect, and whose favor is sought only in candor and faith,—by no arts, but through manly, generous, honest affection. His recognition of woman's needs as a rational creature, and his respect and tenderness for her, as evinced in his writings, are confirmed by, or rather originated in, his private experience, as a glance at the singularly preserved notes and letters to his wife clearly manifests.

At the outset of his courtship he writes: "I have not a thought which relates to you that I cannot in confidence beseech the All-seeing Power to bless me in: this is unusual language to ladies, but you have a mind elevated above the giddy vanities of a sex ensnared by flattery";—and again: "If the advantages of a liberal education, some knowledge of, and as much contempt for, the world, joined with endeavors towards a life of strict virtue, can qualify him" as her life companion, he is ready to pledge himself thereto; and as reciprocal sen-

timents awaken, his faith and happiness increase: "To pass my evenings," he writes, "in so sweet a conversation, and have the esteem of a woman of your merit, has in it a particularity of happiness no more to be expressed than returned." The prayer he composed before marriage reminds one of Dr. Johnson's declaration, that there should be two forms for the solemnization of matrimony, — one for conventional and one for love unions, the holy Church service being too good to celebrate the former. Absence is desolation to the lover: "My books are blank paper, my friends are intruders." Interruptions to their fond communion elicit the most tender apologies: "Dearest being on earth, pardon me, if you do not see me till eleven o'clock, having met a schoolfellow from India"; — or, "Delayed: business with the Treasury"; — or, "I lay last night at Addison's"; — or, "I am with young Tonson at the Griffin Tavern, where I shall dine on a scrap"; — or, "I beg pardon that I am to dine with Mrs. Montagu." Anon there are signs of financial troubles: "I desire you to send me a guinea"; — "I am at a juncture"; — "I shall have cash in the morning"; — "My money has not come to hand, and I am very impatient for it, because I would show you, as soon as it is in my power, a reformation in the management of my expense"; — "Dear Prue, I stay near the Devil Tavern until I can see Will Elderton"; — "All my endeavors tend to extricate my condition, and leave no debt but that to a good wife and a few dear innocents"; — "I send you a guinea, send me some linen"; — "Mr. Glover accommodates me with some money that is to clear the present sorrow this evening"; — "I have made up my account with Mott, enclose receipt for saucepan and spoon: this brings you a quarter of a pound of Bohea, and as much green tea"; — "There is nothing troubles me so much as the consideration that the most amiable and deserving of her sex is obliged to suffer the uneasiness that I do." Little storms occasionally cloud the serene heaven of their love, but they seem only to purify the atmosphere, and usher in brighter skies. "It is wonderful," writes the harassed husband, "when you know what I had to do last night, that you should talk to me thus"; his tears overflow at the recollection of their "little miffs"; and then he is so frank and penitent: Ten thousand times,

my dear, dear Prue, I have been in very great pain for having omitted writing last post. You know the *unhappy gayety* of my temper, when I get in, — and, indeed, I went into company last night”; — “I am, dear Prue, a little in drink”; — “I am very sick with too much wine last night”; — “Thank God, matters are now settled after such a manner, and the renewal of my employments has enabled me to invite you hither, where you shall be attended with plenty, cheerfulness, and quiet.” And in the midst of his anxieties expressions of attachment break out, evidences of conjugal appreciation multiply, and we see his faithful heart beneath all the follies of his conduct: “You are vital to my life”; — “I do assure you there is nothing on earth, except mine honor, and that dignity which every man who lives in the world must preserve to himself, that I am not ready to sacrifice to your will”; — “My life is bound in you.” It has been surmised that Lady Steele, with all her personal charms, was deficient in magnanimity, and over-frugal. The evidences of the latter trait, in the correspondence, indicate that carefulness in expense was a necessity with her, consequent upon his reckless profusion. She nobly adopted his natural daughter into her affections, and seems to have had his welfare fondly at heart. “Dear Prue,” he writes, “do not send after me, for I shall only be ridiculous; I send you word to put you out of frights”; — “I can never be what they call thoroughly frugal; I shun all engagements that would ensnare my integrity”; — “Thank you for your perseverance in urging me to have done with the herd of indigent, unthankful people, and your kind fear that I do not take care of myself; I am ready to melt with gratitude for your goodness in bearing so long as you have; your affair is to keep yourself cheerful.” The appointments he makes with her are truly lover-like: she is to come in a chair and bring his holiday attire, that they may take the air together; — “I dine with Lord Halifax,” he writes, “but for thee I languish”; — “I cannot come home to dinner; but if you will call here, we will take the air together”; — “I am very impatient to have this matter ended some way or other, that I may be with you and the brats”; — “An expression of yours — ‘Good Dick’ — has put me in so much rapture.” Equally tender as a parent, his notes

to Moll and Betty are as fond and frank as those to Prue. "Miss Moll," he writes to the latter, "has taken upon her to hold the sand-box, and is so impatient in her office that I cannot write more." How easy to imagine the petted child, eager to aid the epistolary work of the indulgent father, and by her wiles making him abruptly close his letter thus! Again he writes to dearest Prue: "Miss Moll grows a mighty beauty, and she shall be very prettily dressed, as likewise shall Betty and Eugene; and if I throw away a little money in adorning my brats, I hope you will forgive me." And to them, after their mother's death, his letters are full of kindly counsel and parental love: "My tears are ready to flow, when I tell you that I am, dearest creatures, your most affectionate father."

Countless similar gleanings might be made from these incidental little missives, but enough has been cited to give us a veritable glimpse into Steele's domestic life and warm heart, and to make us realize what pure inspiration his mind thence derived, and how genuine was the source of the social literature he originated. There have been memorable tributes in art and letters to women, offered by the gifted and renowned to the objects of their passion and the faithful companions of their lives; but few seem to us so emphatically to hint the beauty of conjugal devotion as an allusion of Steele to his wife, when in his lonely self-reproach he writes: "The best woman man ever had cannot now lament and pine at his neglect of himself." All the vigilant and earnest solicitude of conjugal love, and all the generous waywardness of its object, are apparent to the imagination in this spontaneous regretful tribute.

HENRY T. TUCKERMAN.